

In the matter of RM-10620:

Dick Bash, KL7IHP did more for Amateur Radio than many people realize. Despite outcries of foul by both the ARRL and the FCC his books and forms of study far exceeded anything out then or now. Shortly after he stopped publishing, the ARRL and other publishers, began publishing the Q&A's for all license classes (strange move). None have done a better job at assisting radio operators to learn and advance through the license structure than Dick. Why do I bring this up?

I earned my Novice license in 1974. I quickly upgraded to General class and during my Master of Education/Counseling program upgraded in 1978 to Advanced class operator. I found his material to be interesting, informative and unusually witty. It was these wits that lead me to my next step in Ham Radio; that of Lead Instructor for a local Ham Radio club. I began with a budget of \$100 for the purchase of study materials and search for a location for the classes. By the time I was finished I had set up a cadre of 6 plus instructors that covered the fields they were strongest in, used the materials of the ARRL, AMECO and others as references, established a site at a local high school where a classroom was attached to an old FM radio station (soon converted to a Ham Radio club station), ran classes practically year round that averaged 22 participants at a time, lead numerous field trips to Amateur radio stores and events and watched well over 200 people get licensed or upgrade. We taught license classes from Novice to Extra Class and people could enter at anytime and not be left behind. They were worked with until licensed. Licensing was a clean process then. Today it is awfully muddled.

During this entire time I strongly opposed losing Morse code as a prerequisite for licensing, but still assisted those who wanted to become code free Technician class licensees. Most found code to be easy to learn and beneficial to their advancement. I haven't been too happy with the current mood of the League or the FCC as it relates to Amateur radio either (especially the license structure). Dick Bash was the main drive in our desire to assist others. His impetuses lead us in many ways. Make the training process educational and enjoyable. I have pride in the work that was done and the people I worked with.

The ARRL among others have assisted the FCC in "streamlining" the licensing structure. Change is inevitable, but it is not always the end product. The Code requirement for advancement is still present, yet weakened. The testing is still present, yet weakened. The Advanced class written test, up until present was more difficult than today's Extra class exam and, yes, 13 wpm truly is far better than today's 5 wpm requirement.

I for one am not interested in giving out handouts, but we must be realistic in what the ultimate goal of the FCC is. Restructuring of the Amateur radio classes. Well, let's get about completing this "streamlining" process. Take one step closer to an end product with licensure. Get it over with and follow the spirit of the proposed rule making. Recognize the Novice operators for their work, passing of Morse code, time learning and move them into the Technician Plus class of operators. Recognize the Advanced class operators for their Morse code achievements, advanced knowledge and practices and move them into Extra class status. Forget waiting twenty years, do it immediately upon their renewal. KL7IHP started something over thirty years ago that has now taken shape. Finish it!

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